K: So, lately I’ve been thinking about the patriarchy.

C: Yeah?

K: Yeah. (laughs)

C: They’ve been thinking about you, too.

K: Yes. So, I really enjoy your definition of patriarchy. And the reason I really enjoy your definition of patriarchy is because I think so many people, when they hear it, they think that that is a negative male statement. Just like they think feminism is anti-male. Or being a feminist means that you don’t like men. And… none of those things are true. And… I also have a very strong belief that, if you want someone to listen, pick someone who looks like them to talk to them. And, since you’re a CIS-gendered, white, heterosexual male – but you’re also heavily bearded, so I don’t know if the non-bearded men will listen to you. Do you have any sway with the non-bearded men, or is it just the bearded community?

C: They know that I have a face underneath this beard.

K: Really?

C: Yeah. It’s like that song… Face Without a Beard.

K: What song?

C: I don’t know. Some people call it “Eyes Without a Face”

K: I thought are you making a bad Eyes Without a Face joke? I thought, “no. My husband is way too clever for that.” (laughs) I see – you guys should see how pleased he looks with himself. Please do not laugh at that joke.

C: I’m trying to

K: Do not encourage him.

C: I’m trying to sing to the level of patriarchy. Trying to speak to that.

K: Okay. Okay. So, can you first – I think it’s good to start off with a definition of patriarchy because this is not a man-bashing episode. And, when I say that I want to dismantle the patriarchy, I’m talking about a political system. I’m talking about oppressive classism. I’m talking about a lot of things. I’m not talking about going out and murdering men.

C: Okay.

K: And dismantling men.

C: Yeah.

K: I don’t want to actually dismantle any particular men.

C: Okay.

K: Any men in particular. Or any unparticular men.

C: I have a list but if you

K: You have a list (laughs) that you would like to dismantle. Yeah, I don’ have any desire to dismantle any men. Okay, so… here it goes. The patriarchy is…

C: It’s when certain men put themselves in charge even if they’re not the ones who would be best.

K: Yes.

C: And hang onto power and don’t give it up. So, I think anytime you talk about any of the “archy” systems: the patriarchy, monarchy, meritocracy. Any of the systems of rule, I guess. Meritocracy ends in “acy” but

K: Yeah.

C: Democracy – any of those. It’s about deciding who’s in power.

K: Yes.

C: And patriarchy is that the – the fathers, the pater from the Latin…

K: So, the two countries that I’m most familiar with are the United States and Japan.

C: Yeah.

K: For me, if you… look at the patriarchy in the United States – if you look at the presidential system – they have generational institutions. Generations of politics. So, like, the Bush dynasty. And then the Clintons were trying to make a political dynasty. But

C: I would argue they did it. They just didn’t get two presidents out of it.

K: Yeah. So… they created their own… political dynasty by switching where they lived and getting Hillary a senator seat, and all of that was very orchestrated based off of Bill Clinton having been president. And I feel like… Obama, in a way, did it, but he did it in a new way. And… Pete Buttigieg tried to copy the way that Obama did it, and how Obama did it is he started at the local government level and then worked up to state senator and then met someone famous to flog his book. And then ran for president based on social popularity. And that’s the same – he became a celebrity and then used his celebrity to become president. And if you all don’t believe me, look at his appearance on Oprah Winfrey before he ever announced that he was running. And the fact that Oprah Winfrey was the person who did almost all of his first appearances. People were coming to see Oprah and, by the way, they saw Obama.

C: Right.

K: So, I feel like… that is – for me – that is… Oprah supporting the patriarchy that says men should be presidents. And I get why she was supporting Barrack Obama – because he is a black man, and I know black men are oppressed very heavily by the patriarchy that says that white men – white, affluent men – should be the ones to rule the world. So, while Obama does buck patriarchy, Obama didn’t do anything to do away with the class system. And he didn’t do anything that changed the distance between the rich and the poor in the United States. And… fight me. That’s where I’m at on this. As a black woman, fight me.

Because Obama was by far the most disappointing president that we’ve had because I believed everything he said when he ran for president. I believed that he would get us out of Afghanistan. I believed that he would care about tackling the class system. And I just feel like his presidency disintegrated into an 8-year healthcare battle. Which is worthy and should happen. Americans absolutely need healthcare. But I think that that’s – he got hyper-focused on that because he didn’t bring the troops home. So, that’s a whole digression and angry rant from me. But when you look at the United States with the pandemic, and men – white men – taking up arms and nobody saying anything about that: that’s the patriarchy. The patriarchy says it’s okay for white men to storm the capital building with guns – of any state – and they won’t be called terrorists.

C: Yeah. I think it’s

K: To me, they’re domestic terrorists. If you’re going to overthrow the government because you want your girl to be able to get her nails done and to go to the park during a pandemic, you

C: I think that, if you use fear – which we might also call terror – to make people behave in the way that you want them to behave with the threat of killing them if they don’t behave in that way – that’s terrorism by definition.

K: Yes.

C: I think the thing about patriarchy is that – and I think there’s a lot of literature about the French revolution that talks about this – to end patriarchy, it’s not a matter of putting a woman on top.

K: No.

C: There’ll still be the whole structure there. And I don’t have any… thinking that matriarchy would be a better system. Because I don’t think that the issue is that it’s men. I think the issue is that it is… unearned power.

K: A power based on oppression. A dynamic based on oppressing others to uplift yourself if you’re a CIS gendered white, heterosexual male.

C: And I think the disparity between the people at the top and the people at the bottom. So, I think that there are a lot of levels to it.

K: Yeah.

C: I think that if you look at, you know, for example, the patriarchy-in-chief, like… there are so many ways in which he is being allowed to… not behave as part of society.

K: Yeah. We’re talking about the president – the current president of the United States. It’s 2020.

C: Yes. And, so, I think that… well, you say okay, the person at the top has massively more power than anybody else. I think as soon as you say that, well, then… there’s a fight to say who’s going to control who gets to the top. And then you get the people slightly below that who determine who gets to be at the top based on who will give them things.

K: So, for me, I’m not anti-democracy, and I’m not anti-hierarchy. I think… that… there needs to be rule of law. There needs to be governance. And neither are you. But the way you’re talking about it – so, Chad has this really bad habit of, whenever we’re talking about white, CIS-gendered heterosexual males, that he speaks really carefully. So, please, babe: borrow my privilege. I own that I have a certain amount of privilege in this topic. Chad and I talk about privilege a lot.

I know some of you might be like, “no. You’re oppressed by your husband.” And I say no I’m not. And I have a right to say that. But, being a woman of color… when we’re talking about dismantling the patriarchy, I do have privilege in this circle. This circle recognizes my voice. Recognizes my right to have a voice and recognizes all of my opinions as being valid. There are times that Chad lends me his CIS-gendered, white, heterosexual male privilege and says, “okay, in this arena, they won’t listen to you. So, let me amplify your voice.” And I say to you, babe, your voice is important. Like, we need allies. We need people outside of the inner circle and the inner sanctum. We need… CIS-gendered, white heterosexual men to be on board this train to get it going and to be successful in dismantling the patriarchy. We’re not going to be able to do it on the outside.

C: Well, I think the lie of it – and I think this is the problem with patriarchy is that it’s a lie – and the lie of it is that if you are the right kind of man, then you get to be in charge.

K: Yeah.

C: And the converse is true. That to be in charge, you need to be the right kind of man. But that doesn’t mean - it’s survivorship bias, basically. Just because the president has, with one exception, always been a white man doesn’t mean that being a white man means you can be president.

K: Correct.

C: You just, like…

K: A wealthy white man.

C: Yes. But even being a wealthy white man doesn’t mean you can be president. So, I think that the problem with patriarchy isn’t that it’s hierarchical. Because I agree with you that, once you – once you pass a certain number of people, just for organization, you need some kind of hierarchy.

K: Yeah.

C: The problem I have is with the height of that hierarchy. With the difference between the top and the bottom.

K: Yeah.

C: If you look at the bottom, I think the absolutely bottom of American society are prisoners.

K: Yes.

C: Who… slavery is not against the law for prisoners. The amendment did not abolish slavery for people who are in prison. The average sa- the average wage of a person in prison right now is 23 cents an hour.

K: Yes.

C: And then at the top, if you take – I think it’s the… four or five most… four or five richest people have more wealth than the bottom 50% of people.

K: Yes.

C: And, so, America is not… like, you know, minority-white. To where that bottom 50% is not at all white. There are a lot of white people caught up in that bottom 50%.

K: And I think that it’s… that percentage of white people who are stuck in poverty and stuck in generational poverty… that causes a lot of the racial divide. And they blame people of color rather than their white oppressors. And… yes, I’m saying white oppressors. White folks, you all are oppressed in the United States. It is a fact. Because, if I tell you, “what is the political leaning and standing of someone in Arkansas?” And if you have any sort of stereotype, then you’re part of the problem. Because I know many liberal, left-leaning socialists that come from Arkansas. They’re not the majority in the state, and, when you look at red states, it’s not so cut and dry.

You can’t say, “oh this is a blue state” – because take my own state, my home state of California: everybody thinks that California is progressive and liberal. It is not. More often than not, there have been more republican governors than there have been democratic governors. I think everybody forgets that California elected Arnold Schwarzenegger.

C: Yes.

K: And…

C: After a successful campaign to recall Gray Davis.

K: Yes. And, so, I think that… people don’t understand that there is a huge, huge group of really, just… right-wing, just everything that I associate negatively with the patriarchy. There’s a huge, huge pocket throughout the state of those types of thinkers.

C: Right.

K: And, so, to say that any one state is any one thing… is uninformed. And, I think, dangerous. And I think it causes people from liberal and progressive, quote unquote “liberal” and “progressive” states – it causes complacency in them, and they don’t vote. And that’s how we see states flipping. Because everybody thinks, “oh I come from a state that doesn’t matter. My beliefs don’t matter. Because this state has been, historically, this – has historically voted in ways that I approve of.”

C: Mhm.

K: Or “this state has historically behaved in ways that I approve of.” That’s not guaranteed. There’s mass migration going on all over the world. And, so, states change. People change. Population densities change. And I think it’s just foolish to think that any one state in an election year – that this far out people are saying, oh the election’s going to go this way or that way. I’m like, you guys can’t even tell me whether or not we’ll be able to vote in person in the United States come November. How the hell are you calling an election?

C: Yeah.

K: It’s ludicrous to me. So, this is me asking everybody in the United States: please vote. Like… get up and vote. Vote your beliefs, and

C: Assuming you have the right to. If you’re a permanent resident but not a citizen, don’t go vote. You’ll get in trouble. Vote in your country but not in the United States.

K: Yeah. Another thing that, like, when we look at the patriarchy, and when we talk about the patriarchy: we’re talking about people having felony convictions for marijuana, which is now legal at the state level but not at the federal level.

C: Right.

K: And… not being able to vote if you’re a felon – taking away the voices of non-violent felons.

C: And we saw in Florida when the court said people who have served their time for their felony have to be allowed to vote.

K: Yeah.

C: And then the governor said, “but only if they’ve paid their fines.”

K: Yes.

C: And I don’t know what it will have been when this comes out, but as of the time of this recording, the court said, “actually that’s not – that’s not okay. People have to be allowed to vote even if they haven’t paid their fines.”

K: Yeah.

C: Which enfranchises a disproportionately… non-white population to vote. And I think that prison reform is a whole other thing – whether you

K: Yeah, we’re going to have a whole other podcast on prison reform – Japan versus the United States, a comparison of the two.

C: I think, growing up Mormon, I have a particular view of patriarchy because Mormonism is explicitly patriarchal.

K: Yes.

C: In each local organization, each stake is what they’re called, you have somebody who is called the patriarch.

K: Yeah. (laughs)

C: And they’re not the person in charge, but they’re the person who gets to talk directly to god, and… have god tell you things.

K: Yeah. The heavenly father only wants to hear from the patriarch.

C: And then you have the, you know, the leadership, which is the high elders and the elders

K: All men.

C: Yeah, all men. And down to the deacons, who are twelve-year-old boys – twelve and thirteen year old boys – and any boy who is at least twelve has more power, in heaven, than any woman. And they’ve done some things, recently, to… putatively give women more of a voice. But I think that the strategy that’s used there… that, “look, you have it okay. Why are you complaining about your place? At least you’re not at the bottom.” Is used more broadly in American politics, in particular, where they say, “look, we understand that you’re on food stamps. You’ve probably got disabled family. You don’t have healthcare. But… if you support us, right, we’ll make sure that you’re better off than black men.”

K: Yeah.

C: And, so, you get people who are… voting and… being political

K: Voting in ways that do not serve them.

C: Right. Being – voting and being political and holding beliefs that are intended to keep them at least above somebody.

K: Yeah.

C: “At least I’m above women. At least I’m above black men. At least I’m above this or that.” Rather than questioning why they’re so far down.

K: Right.

C: Why they don’t have their basic needs. Why their life is such a struggle. Because – and I – I find this

K: I think as long as you’re blaming it on – as long as they can keep us talking about race rather than talking about gender. And talking about racial politics rather than gender politics, I think they’re keeping us distracted from what matters. I think gender politics – I think racial politics is so, it just keeps us divided. Because if you’re black or brown, we should all be standing together. And in black and brown, I include my Jewish brother and sisters, so… I’m Native American. I’m Jewish. And African-American. I prefer black over African-American, but because we’re in mixed company, I used African-American because a lot of my black sisters and brothers prefer the term African-American, and it’s incredibly disrespectful to address people how they want to be addressed.

But, for me, I have always felt that… the division that has been created in the United States between… Jews and blacks, and… indigenous and Mexican – between those four groups, if we all got together and voted our best interest, our best interest is the same. It is exactly the same. And everybody – you all can fight me on this. Because today I’m in a mood. Fight me. (laughs)

C: Yeah.

K: Which I got from somebody who says it all the time. “Fight me.” And I love that. Fight me. Let’s get – but be respectful. Let’s talk about it if you think differently than me. Because, if – so, I understand that there are a lot of self-loathing Jews who are conditioned to behave as through they’re white. But, when those white men put on their hoods and come to burn and kill, they come to burn and kill our Jewish brothers and sisters, our black and brown brothers and sisters. They don’t care. We’re all mud people to them. And we’re all disgusting to them, and they’re at the top of the patriarchy.

Why are you supporting someone who’s racist, and you know they’re racist, and they’re racist against you because of some economic BS that they’re spewing at you? That, “oh, we’ll get you above this person or that person” well say, “why aren’t you trying to elevate everyone? Why aren’t we trying to raise the bottom? Why are there public schools in the United States with asbestos in them? Why are there public schools in the United States that are closed down?” Like beautiful public schools. Why is Michigan allowed to happen? Why is Detroit allowed to happen? Those are the questions we should be asking ourselves.

C: There are a lot of schools

K: Like, why is it okay for people in the United States to not have clean drinking water? To not be able to turn on their tap and have clean drinking water. Why isn’t that a problem for everyone in the United States?

C: And, for me, that is a problem. And it’s a problem that – that failure factory is an education study term. And those are high schools in the United States that have below 50% graduate rate.

K: Yeah.

C: And there’s a lot of them. And they’re mostly in non-white areas and mostly in poor areas. And those areas mostly coincide. And I think what – what patriarchy and that system does in general is… to say “look, we have these rules, and if you play perfectly you can be plucked out of the mass.” And I – I see the same thing in disability politics. Where, like… because I am employed and highly educated, people are like, “well, you’re better than them. You’re better than the people who need, you know, constant assistance or who can’t work.” I’m more fortunate. I would agree about that. But… I don’t think that I deserve to be more fortunate in that I don’t think that they deserve to not have the basics of life.

K: Yes.

C: And I think the United States, and Japan too, are rich enough that they can afford… for everybody to receive the basics of life.

K: Yes. Absolutely. So, for me… I know that… an area that I need to grow in is when I’m talking about race politics. I need to include disabled people in that. And that’s something that I’m growing and improving on. I’m disabled, but… for me, when I was growing up and becoming an activist… I learned color politics. And, so, this is an – a living, breathing example right in front of you: me, the person, Kisstopher is showing you how divisive racial politics are. That two communities that I belong in, I didn’t list them when I was talking about racial politics.

LGBTQIA+ and disabled community. We need to band together all of us and say, “wow, okay. Let’s sit down and talk about it. And let’s think about it.” Because, in having this conversation, I’m like, “man, come on Kisstopher. Do better. Include your disabled brothers and sisters. Include your LGBTQIA+ family members.” And then, there, you see the uptick in the language. I’m saying brothers and sisters over and over again, but when I switch to LGBTQIA+, I say family members. Because I should be saying family members.

C: Or siblings to include non-binary people as well.

K: Family members include non-binary people.

C: Yeah, I’m saying brothers and sisters does not.

K: Yeah, and, so… looking at my language, calling myself out, and identifying where I need to improve, I think that’s what we all should be doing. We all should be challenging ourselves to break down our biases. And… fight the patriarchy and dismantle the patriarchy that taught us these biases. That taught us that the world should be binary, and that it’s okay to say, “brothers and sisters” rather than “siblings” or “family members.” Because we don’t want to exclude people. I don’t want to exclude anyone. I’m saying – and I don’t think that every white, CIS-gendered, heterosexual male who has accumulated wealth and is engaged in wealth hoarding is necessarily a bad person. I don’t think that. What I’m saying is the structure that taught him to hoard wealth. The structure that taught him to want to oppress. The structure that taught me that the world should be binary that I’m constantly fighting against in my own head. Because it doesn’t sit with my beliefs. That’s the structure that I mean when I’m saying patriarchy.

C: Well, and I would say – I don’t know how true this is for you – but that I was taught that the worst thing that you can be – like the absolute worst thing you can be – is discontent.

K: Yeah.

C: Is a complainer. Like, to be like, you know

K: I was taught to be a fighter. So, I was taught to be discontent but to fight that discontentment.

C: Mm.

K: And that – that’s its own thing.

C: Yeah.

K: It’s still you’re supposed to get to a place of contentment or disrupt and fight until you can be content.

C: Right.

K: And, so, for me, that created complacency when I became content with my life.

C: Yeah.

K: And, so, fighting against that complacency is an ongoing struggle for me.

C: So, I think complacency and contentment can let you say, “well, you know”

K: Leads to lazy speech. Leads to things like me saying brothers and sisters rather than saying siblings. And I think brother and sisters comes, for me… it’s completely rooted in racial politics.

C: Well, and I think, if we look at the ongoing Karen debate. You know

K: Which was started by a white comic named Dane Cook.

C: My mom was a Karen – that wasn’t her actual name but it could have been.

K: Yeah. Shout out to Dane Cook.

C: Okay.

K: Total white guy. Total white comic.

C: Shout out to Dane Cook.

K: (laughs) I don’t think you’re a nice person though, dude, sorry. I think you’re part of the patriarchy.

C: So, my mom… fought against the equal rights amendment. Like, when you and your mom were fighting for

K: For it. (laughs)

C: Yeah. My mom was out there fighting against it. Dragging us along.

K: Yeah.

C: Like, “do you want to take away my ability to be a mother?”

K: Yeah. That’s not it.

C: And, so, her content was always, like… be content that you’re not as bad off as these people. And… you know, don’t pay attention to who’s above you. Pay attention to who’s below you. “Things can get worse for you” is always the threat. “Things can get worse for you.”

K: Do you feel that that threat exists in Japan?

C: I feel that that threat does exist in Japan. I feel like it

K: I don’t feel like it’s a threat. I feel like – so, here’s the difference between Japan – the biggest thing, for me… the thing that was most shocking is… it was legal to discriminate against women when we… when we moved to Japan. There was no laws against – so, women would go to four year universities, study economics with their male counterparts, and then… be put on the track of office lady.

C: Yeah.

K: And what an office lady means…. It’s basically, sort of, like… maid slash secretary slash personal assistant. Like, you would have to make tea for the meetings, and you couldn’t speak during the meetings. You would pass the memos around that were meant from department to department to get consensus. And you would just stamp it to say, “I’ve seen it.” But your consent wasn’t really discussed. There weren’t women – there weren’t as many, there were a few, but there weren’t as many as there are now – and they’re working to improve it… women in executive positions.

C: Yeah.

K: And for a woman to be in executive position, she had to be past child-bearing years. Like, you could not get promoted. So, women were put on the track of office lady, but they never had any opportunity for advancement in the workforce.

C: Yeah, and that’s not… a loose translation. The literal term is “OL”

K: Yeah.

C: For “office lady.” And pregnancy discrimination is still rampant in Japan. It’s still extremely hard to… be taken seriously if you’re a woman who is

K: It’s still legal in interviews to ask women if they’re married.

C: Yes.

K: It’s still legal in job interviews to ask women if they have children, to ask if they have a serious boyfriend, to ask when they plan to get pregnant. To ask how many children that they want to have… and to ask what age their children are. How many days is their child sick in a year. And… to ask – so, for me, in Japan you might not get a job if you’re divorced.

C: Right.

K: If you’re a divorced mother, it’s really hard to get a good job at a good company. So, what I – when I have Japanese nationals who are divorced and single moms, I always send them to the bilingual job fairs.

C: Yeah.

K: And I always send them to recruiters that are mid-career recruiters because a lot of Japanese nationals don’t know that there are recruiters who are out there for people who are in their 30s and 40s because Japan also has ageism.

C: Yes.

K: And forced retirement. So…

C: So, those recruiters are called “tenshoku recruiters” which is literally “career change.” But the posters for them always show men in their early twenties.

K: Yes.

C: And… basically anybody with at least three years of working experience is eligible for one of these career changes.

K: Yeah.

C: They don’t want somebody less than that for complicated reasons that aren’t related to the patriarchy, but… it’s really a boys’ club in Japan. And the few women who make it out are used – as they are in the United States – as a justification of the system. Like, “look, the system can’t be rigged if anybody can beat it.”

K: Yeah, and that’s not true.

C: No, I mean, look at casinos. The house always wins. That doesn’t mean that nobody wins money. It means that, overall, the house wins. Overall, men are disproportionally advantaged. In Japan, it came to light last year that the medical school admissions test – they were just chopping off, I forget how many points, but a huge number of points if you were a woman. They were like, “well, more men get into medical school than women because they score better.”

K: Yeah.

C: Well, yes. When you subtract, you know, twenty percent of their score for being a woman, it’s going to be much tougher to score better than the men.

K: I find the pink tax in Japan isn’t so much in products. I find that it’s in opportunity.

C: Yes.

K: So, the pink tax is… any sort of taxation that… women suffer.

C: Yeah.

K: And, so, it’s a gender-based taxation. I don’t think it’s so much women, I think it’s anyone who’s not a CIS-gendered, heterosexual male. There is a tax that you paid for being othered.

C: Yes.

K: And it’s called the pink tax. And… some people call it a black tax. But, in Japan, it’s more of a gender tax.

C: Yeah.

K: Than it is – because in Japan, the racism is different.

C: I think, in Japan, the racism is not as… it doesn’t affect as many people because 98% of people in Japan are ethnically Japanese.

K: Yeah.

C: And, so… to racially discriminate, you’re… basically discriminating against foreigners plus a very, very small handful of Japanese people who are not ethnically Japanese.

K: Yeah.

C: And it’s one of those things where it’s illegal but it happens anyway. And I think

K: Yeah, because there – we talked about, before, how there are signs that say, “no foreigners allowed.”

C: Yeah.

K: I crack up because they’re in Japanese, so… be racist. Think it. And I’ll just be like, “I speak no Japanese.” I go to zero Japanese in the face of racism.

C: Yeah.

K: Each and every time. And it works for me like a dream.

C: But I mean - I think COVID has really brought to the fore the differential treatment. So, there are a lot of permanent residents – a lot relative to how many there are – a lot of permanent residents of Japan who were not in Japan at the time that the… airline travel was banned.

K: Yeah, at the times they were locking people out of the country.

C: And they have not been able to return even though Japanese citizens were allowed to return.

K: Yes. So, it was really scary for us when we think about travel. When we think about leaving Japan, it was just like, “wow okay. We might not be able to get home one day if something bad happens.” But, for me… how that ties into the patriarchy for me is because it’s just like how it is in the United States, where if you’re a CIS-gendered, heterosexual, wealthy white man, then you should be in power and your voice should be heard. And the same is here in Japan: if you’re a CIS-gendered, heterosexual Japanese man, then you matter more than everybody else.

C: Yeah.

K: When they were looking at rates of positive tests and all of that, men were getting tested at a much higher rate than women. Men were getting hospitalized at a much higher rate than women, and there was just a lot of women who didn’t even… bother to go in. And, so, when you look at patriarchal systems, that’s the same way when they say, “well what’s the legacy of slavery?” The legacy of slavery is that a lot of black folks don’t even bother to go to the hospital. That have the insurance. That have the money. They just don’t bother because their voices aren’t heard. So, just like COVID revealed how it was impacting black and brown people more because doctors weren’t listening to their symptoms or taking them seriously. The same thing was happening in Japan.

C: Yeah.

K: So, it happens to foreigners a great deal. And women in Japan.

C: Well, and I’ve been in doctors’ offices with you both in Japan and the United States where you’ll say something, and they’ll look at me and ask if that’s true.

K: Yeah. Yeah, I’ve always had a chaperone with me. I’v always needed a chaperone. I always had friends go with me because they always ask. Well, one of the reasons. I have a really are disease that nobody’s ever heard of, and I’m the only person that they’ve ever met with it, so they think it’s impossible. Rare disease doesn’t mean impossible disease. Hello. And then I also have lupus. So… because I have hereditary coproporphyria. So, for me, the patriarchy in Japan is much more blatant and much more honest.

C: Yeah.

K: They don’t pretend that there are equal opportunities for women. They talk openly about it. Every time I attend the women’s conference, prime minister Abe comes and gives really great lip service to all of these things that are going to be done.

C: The womenomics.

K: Yeah.

C: “We’re going to increase the percentage of the workforce to 30% women by 2030.” Which that goal right there should tell you something.

K: Right? So (laughs) something that cracked me up at the women’s conference. So, in Japan, there’s a thing that all Japanese do when – not all Japanese – there’s a thing that a lot of Japanese do. “Eeeeeeeehhh.” And, so, the reason I bring that up is because prime minister Abe said – was talking about maternity leave for men, and the men in the audience were not understanding. And the women in the audience – the Japanese nationals were not understanding what prime minister Abe was talking about.

C: Yeah.

K: And, so they… were just trying all of these different translations and then finally – like all of these different ways to present it – and then finally they found a slideshow from somewhere that showed a man holding a baby with an X over the company. And everybody was like, “eeeeeeehhhh.” And they were like, “sugoi. Hontou ni.” Like, really? That’s amazing. A man can stay home and take care of his baby? And they said, “but how would the man know what to do?”

C: Yeah.

K: And then they were like, “well, maybe we could do it where the woman did the first three months, and then the man did the second three months” and then there was this discussion on the floor, “maybe we should extend maternity leave to twelve months for women so that way, when men took their three months of maternity leave the baby was already functioning.” It was so bizarre to me that I was like, sitting there at a women’s conference listening to them talking about extending maternity leave for women because men could not cope with maternity leave.

C: With paternity leave.

K: Yeah, with paternity leave before the baby was a year old. And I was like… good and bad? It was so, just like… warped. I felt so twisted up.

C: Yeah.

K: Because I think it’s awesome to have either maternity or paternity leave for a year. That, on the face of it, awesome thing. Like… yes. That’s amazing. But then… the reason for it being because – so, it wouldn’t be paternity leave, it would just be maternity leave.

C: Mhm.

K: Like… it – I’m still, you can see I’m still all messed up about it. Like, I want to fight for everybody to be able to take the first year of their child’s life off. I think that’s amazing to be able to do that. But… yeah. Saying that men can’t cope with newborns. I don’t like that. I think it’s disrespectful to men.

C: Yeah.

K: And, it just – and I think it’s asinine. But that’s… openly discussed, and so, in Japan, I find that it’s just like – the patriarchy is openly discussed.

C: Yes, it is.

K: And, like, the law that – you know, the rule, it’s not a law – the rule that women have to wear makeup to work. Like, that’s just openly discussed. That you have to

C: The fact that it’s not illegal to require that.

K: Yeah. And the fact that you’ve got to at least put on some lipstick. And, so, for me, I find that interesting. Because I would put on lip gloss if I had to. So, for me, I went the extreme. And it just jacked them up because they didn’t know how to mess with me about it.

C: Mhm.

K: So… I was a makeup artist in my youth because I modeled, and so I would just go in with my face beat way too much and way too colorful. And… then I started wearing men’s suits.

C: Yes.

K: And, so, that to me – I was being, hi Auntie Kate, I was being a gender outlaw and saying, “okay. You’re saying I have to wear professional attire.”

C: And your list of professional attire, like

K: Includes a tie.

C: Yeah.

K: And any time they tried to call me on it, I’m like, “my pocket square matches my tie.” (laughs)

C: Yup.

K: Because of your lovely wardrobe. Because you have – you love a good pocket square.

C: I do.

K: And so, we have – we have some that are like identical pattern matching cut from the same material, and then we have others to mix and match because you like to mix it up.

C: I do like to mix it up.

K: Yeah because you’re very dandy, and I love it. So, you have like… some bespoke suits and such. And… all of that. You’re looking at me like, “why are you talking about this?”

C: Why are you talking about this? They’re going to think I’m the man.

K: (laughs) For me, you are the man. And sometimes, I like to be oppressed. (laughs) That was so hashtag Twitter after dark.

C: Yeah. That was so wrong.

(laughter)

K: Chad is so red right now. (laughs)

C: But I – it reminds me of my mom’s thing. Like, to not Twitter after dark it

K: (laughs)

C: Where… it was… “I’m better than these people, but any time that somebody wants to call me out on being racist or supporting the patriarchy or whatever” - well, supporting the patriarchy she’d be like, “yes I do. It’s god’s will.”

K: Yeah.

C: But being racist or whatever, it was, “well, but men are in charge of me. I’m oppressed, too.”

K: Yeah.

C: And I feel like there’s – that particular brand of, what’s usually called white feminism that tries to say that because of the patriarchy then everyone who’s not at the top is at the bottom.

K: Yeah, and that’s not true.

C: That’s not true, and if people would accept that that’s not true, then it would be easier to say, “look, there’s this whole system and structure that’s being kept in place by people who are acting against their own best interests.” Because they’re being told you can rise up a level further than you deserve if you will just act right. If you will… you know… and it’s coded different ways for different communities. If you pull up your saggy pants and keep your – you know, keep your afro really close. Not a big afro. Or… if you will just not speak so shrilly. If you’ll just accept correction gently for women.

And, just like… or if you’ll learn to speak English. Or if you will just go work a regular job. There’s always the respectability politics of “you can rise above your station if you’ll do this.” And, look… like, there are black billionaires. Look at Oprah. Therefore, how can there be racism? “Oprah’s a billionaire. Therefore, racism and sexism are over.”

K: And so… I don’t quote Michelle Obama a lot. There’s only, actually, one quote of hers – and you guys may have heard me say it before – she was on The View and she said, “we can’t have a discussion about diversity if I’m the only diversity in the room.”

C: Yeah.

K: And… diversity politics has people voting against their own best interest. And I think that we should vote money. Vote who is going to give economic and educational opportunities to everyone.

C: Yes.

K: Who is pushing that? That everyone deserves an education, and everyone deserves to make a living wage. Because, once we have everyone making a living wage, and we have everyone getting an education, then

C: See, I would go further than that. I would say that if you work, you deserve a living wage. But that you deserve housing and food and clothing even if you don’t work.

K: Okay, so… there’s – that’s… mmm. I know some people from countries that have socialization, and they see a problem with everybody getting… so, I don’t know. I’m still evolving in this area. I’m still growing, so I know that I’m firmly for a living wage, and I’m firmly for those – so, for me, the problem I have with this – the problem I have with that specifically is who they would choose to be able to work, and who they would say cannot work.

C: Right.

K: Because, for me, I should not be able to work; I have hereditary coproporphyria, I have lupus. I’m dyslexic, and I have PTSD. So, I have four disabilities. Therefore, I should not be able to work, and I shouldn’t as hell be able to be a therapist. And that’s not true. That’s not accurate. And yes, I am allergic to the sun. But (laughs)

C: Yeah, and so to be clear, I don’t mean a separate for people who can’t work and a separate system for people who can work.

K: And I think that people should be able to decide whether or not they want to work.

C: Absolutely. So, this is way beyond the scope, so I’m not going to talk about it, but I am – I am firmly in favor of the universal basic income. Which would mean everybody can choose to work or not work for whatever reasons and still have their needs met.

K: Yeah, you’re a total communist. Like, a true communist.

C: I am not a communist. I’m a socialist, but

(laughter)

K: I think that that’s a good place to end it, and if they want to hear more about this, follow us on over to Patreon.

C: Where I’ll be talking about the Japanese Communist Party and how much good they have done for the country.

K: (laughs)

C: As the only loyal opposition party.

K: They are not actually communist though, but that’s another topic. That’s a different debate. So, if you didn’t like this episode, tell us about it. Tell us why. If you did, let’s keep the conversation going.

C: If you didn’t like it, go back and listen to one you liked again.

K: (laughs) We hope you stick around and follow us over to Patreon. And… we hope that you enjoyed the episode. Talk to you next week.

C: Bye.

K: Bye.